

WASHINGTON, D.C. - New visa regulations that took effect this week mean that most foreign travelers entering the United States now require a visa or an electronic travel authorization. Prior to this week, citizens of many countries could enter the country without a visa.

The regulation, which began on January 12, affects all foreign travelers to the United States except those from Bermuda, Canada, the Marshall Islands and Micronesia.

The biggest change affects travelers from nations participating in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program. Previously, travelers from these countries could enter the United States without authorization. The process to obtain electronic travel authorization is simple and free. Travelers must register online at <http://www.travel.state.gov> at least 72 hours before their travel date.

"Implementing the electronic travel authorization program is another step toward balancing security and service for travelers entering the United States," said Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel), co-chair of the Congressional Travel and Tourism Caucus. "We want to keep our doors open to others but we must know who is entering and leaving our country. This program is another tool to keep our nation safe."

The affected countries include Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

More information is available by contacting U.S. Customs and Border Protection at 877-CBP-5511 or <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel> .

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